

# FUNDAMENTALS

Newsletter for Friends of Irish Studies

## Canadian Irish Studies Foundation

### Honorary Patrons

His Excellency Declan Kelly  
Ambassador of Ireland

Rt. Honorable Paul Martin, PC, MP  
Former Prime Minister of Canada

Jean J. Charest, C.P.  
Premier of Quebec

### Chair

Brian O'N. Gallery,\* Montreal

### Vice-Chair

Brian Casey,\* Montreal

### Treasurer

Gary O'Connor,\* Montreal

### Directors

Kathy Assayag,\* Montreal  
Laurent Beaudoin, FCA, Montreal  
Jack Brennan,\* Montreal  
John Cleghorn, Montreal  
Peter J. Cullen,\* Montreal  
Richard Drouin, Montreal  
Peter B.M. Eby, Toronto  
W. Brian Edwards,\* Montreal  
Sean Finn,\* Montreal  
Daniel Fournier, Montreal  
Dennis Freeman,\* Toronto  
P. André Gervais,\* Montreal  
Lonsdale W. Holland, Halifax  
Daniel Johnson,\* Montreal  
Susan Kruger,\* Montreal  
Eric H. Molson, Montreal  
Patrick Murray, Ottawa  
David P. O'Brien, Calgary  
Philip R. O'Brien,\* Montreal  
John J. O'Connor,\* Montreal  
Barney Powers, St. John's  
Catherine Richards,\* Montreal  
Ann Soden,\* Montreal  
James M. Stanford, Calgary  
Michelle Tisseyre,\* Montreal  
William Wilson,\* Montreal

### Past Chair

Peter R. O'Brien, Montreal

### Executive Director

Michael Kenneally, Montreal

\* Trustee

1590 Dr. Penfield Ave.  
Montreal, Quebec H3G 1C5  
Tel. : 514-848-8711  
Fax : 514- 848-4514  
E-mail : [cdnirish@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:cdnirish@alcor.concordia.ca)  
Web : [www.cdnirish.concordia.ca](http://www.cdnirish.concordia.ca)

## Niall O'Dowd Delivers Third Annual St. Patrick's Society Lecture



Present at the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation Trustees meeting (from left to right): William Wilson, Jack Brennan, Brian Edwards, Brian O'Neill Gallery, Niall O'Dowd, Catherine Richards, Gary O'Connor, André Gervais and Michael Kenneally.

By Joseph Donnelly

The Centre for Canadian Irish Studies presented the St. Patrick's Society lecture in September by Niall O'Dowd, founder of the Irish Voice Newspaper and Irish America Magazine. Held at Concordia University's De Sève Theatre, O'Dowd's talk was on the Irish diaspora in the United States and the country's role in brokering peace in Northern Ireland.

O'Dowd began by recognizing the Irish who came to both Canada and the United States, saying that what they survived, we could not even live. "To have accomplished what we have has been extraordinary," said O'Dowd. "We really came from an unfortunate place yet somehow we managed to keep our traditions and our history alive." He noted that those who fled Ireland in the 19th century brought with them a very radical tradition into America that ultimately wanted justice for British colonization. O'Dowd contrasted that sentiment with today's accomplishments in Northern Ireland and the pivotal role that the Bill Clinton administration played in the 1998 Good Friday Peace Agreement.

The sketches for that agreement began in 1990, according to O'Dowd, when he visited Clinton as governor of Arkansas. He said he was very pleased to discover that Clinton

was well-versed on the issues, having studied at Oxford in 1968 during the Civil Rights movement in Northern Ireland. "This guy was different because he understood the issue," O'Dowd said. "And not only that, he was prepared to act on the issue." Clinton assured O'Dowd then that if he were elected president, he would give Gerry Adams a visa and would personally become involved in the peace process.

Years later, a settlement was reached that, according to O'Dowd, the dead could live with. He added Clinton was true to his word, even at great political risk. "I could not see, post-9/11, a president take that kind of risk again," he said. O'Dowd notes that as a result of 9/11 the number of Irish coming to the United States on work visas has gone down. As Chairman of the Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform, he has been pressing the American and Irish governments to allow a freer flow of workers and people.

This was the Third Annual Lecture by the St. Patrick's Society, now celebrating 175 years in Montreal. Earlier in the day, Niall O'Dowd met with the Trustees of the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation.

Subscription forms to Niall O'Dowd's Irish America Magazine are available in this journal.



The Chair, Trustees and Directors of the Foundation wish all our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Editor: Michael Kenneally  
 Associate Editor: Kester Dyer  
 Editorial Assistant: Mary Katherine Carr  
 Contributors: Joseph Donnelly, Tim O'Connor,  
 Valerie Shannon

## 2008 Scholarship Winners Announced



Kate Fitzpatrick, 2008 recipient of the Fr. Govenlock Scholarship

This Fall semester, as in past years, the Centre for Canadian Irish Studies has awarded a series of undergraduate and graduate scholarships for a total of \$20,000.

All of the annual scholarships are made available through the generosity of supporters of the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation. The Foundation expresses its appreciation to all its ongoing financial supporters who have created these scholarships.

Students who are enrolled in either the Minor or Certificate in Canadian Irish Studies and compete for the scholarships. Graduate students submit a description of their MA or PhD project along with a CV, a letter of intent and a letter of reference for evaluation by the Graduate Scholarship Evaluation Committee at the Centre for Canadian Irish Studies.

Graduate scholarships in Canadian Irish Studies are open to students in all departments in the Faculties of Arts and Science or Fine Arts providing that there is a significant Irish element to the proposed project.

## \$337,000 Already Raised by Capital Campaign – Only \$63,000 To Go

### John Cleghorn Donates \$5000 to Capital Campaign

*Further donations of \$1000 each from Canadian Irish Studies Foundation Trustees Daniel Johnson and John J. O'Connor*

The Capital Campaign's goal to raise \$400,000 continues to receive generous support as it nears its target. One of the first to play a part in the success of the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation, Mr. John Cleghorn, former Chair and CEO of the Royal Bank of Canada, has once again come forward and made a personal contribution to bring the Campaign closer to its objective with a donation of \$5000.

Former Premier Daniel Johnson, after whose notable Quebec Irish family the recent Johnson Chair in Canadian Irish Studies was named, and John J. O'Connor, Former Senior Partner of Ogilvy Renault

Law Firm each donated \$1000. Both Mr. Johnson and Mr. O'Connor are Trustees of the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation.

Brian O'Neill Gallery and all the Trustees convey their gratitude to all those who have helped reach the \$337,000 accumulated so far. With the target now in sight, it is hoped that this objective will be met soon. If you would like to help the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation, please consider donating to the Capital Campaign. Or, alternatively, you can contribute to our Annual Campaign or fund a scholarship or bursary in Canadian Irish Studies.

Graduate Scholarships	2008 Recipient	Amount
St. Patrick's Society	Sonya Ocampo-Gooding / Deanna Del Vecchio & Laurel Hart (group project)	\$5,000 (\$2,500 each)
Fr. Shaun Gerard McCarthy Govenlock	Kathryn Fitzpatrick	\$1,500
Undergraduate Entrance Scholarships	2008 Recipient	Amount
Geraldine O'Loughlin Stanford	Natasha Forgues	\$1,000
Thomas D'Arcy McGee	Benjamin Fussell	\$500
Arthur Meighen	Jenny Leigh Dancer	\$500
Francis Hincks	Geoffrey Aucoin	\$250
Undergraduate In-house Scholarships	2008 Recipient	Amount
Irene Mulroney	Cameron Fenton	\$2,000
Matthew Hamilton Gault	Katherine Chirke	\$1,250
Stephen Dowd	Jean-Marc Leduc	\$1,000
J. Armand Bombardier	Christine Sherrington	\$1,000
Irish Protestant Benevolent Society	Kristin Tedd	\$750
Moirá Ann Snow	Josephine Cher	\$700
Timothy Edward McIninch	Teresa Bowyer	\$250
Gerard Keyes	Valerie Shannon	\$250
Mary Travers	Nadia Fabrizi	\$250
Sean Treacy	Anne Coulter	\$250
Undergraduate In-house Scholarships	2008 Recipient	Amount
Edna Amy McConkey Soden Bursary	Various	\$500
Maurice "Moe" Malone Bursary	Various	\$500
Taughner Family Bursary	Various	\$500

In 2008, graduate awards went to Kate Fitzpatrick (History), Deanna Del Vecchio and Laurel Hart (Photography) and Sonya Ocampo-Gooding (Art History and Theological Studies) who have all undertaken projects related to Irish

Studies in their respective fields.

At the undergraduate level, it should be noted that the top award, the Irene Mulroney Scholarship worth \$2500, went to Cameron Fenton.



# Canadian Irish Studies Foundation Financial report

## Nine months ended September 30, 2008

Although the recent turmoil in the markets has had an impact on the finances of the Foundation, the results to September 30 are very respectable. The market value of the investment portfolio has decreased by approximately \$233,000 from December 31, 2007 to \$3,268,000. Investment income for the nine months amounted to \$287,000 compared to \$413,500 for the year ending December 31, 2007.

Contributions for the nine months were \$67,000 compared to \$116,000 for 2007. The majority of the contributions, approximately \$45,000, were for the courses fund.

In mid-October the Foundation received \$1,000,000 from the Quebec government for the previously announced Johnson Chair. We expect to receive the second \$1,000,000 early in 2009, as well as \$50,000 generated by the \$1 million set aside by The Concordia University Foundation. The inaugural holder of the Johnson Chair is expected to be hired on July 1, 2009.

In addition to the funds held directly by the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation, the original \$1 million donation made for the Chair in Canadian Irish Studies at Concordia in the nineties has grown to approximately \$1,427,000. Meanwhile, the current balance in the Centre's operating budget is \$177,000.

In summary, the Foundation will have a good year financially although not as strong as prior years considering the economic conditions.

Meanwhile, Canadian Irish Studies has accumulated two additional assets: The Sheila Maloney Painting Collection, housed at the Centre, was purchased for \$55,000 by Brian Leavitt and donated to Canadian Irish Studies. Two installments of the Ann Saddlemyer Book Collection have been received by Canadian Irish Studies and were appraised at \$28,500. A substantial proportion of the collection is still to be donated over the coming years.

## Proposal Being Submitted for a Major in Canadian Irish Studies

*By Tim O'Connor*

The Centre for Canadian Irish Studies at Concordia University is working towards the creation of a Major in Canadian Irish Studies. This exciting development would be a Canadian first, and would compliment the existing Minor and Certificate programs.

The Major would give students the opportunity to study the discipline of Canadian Irish Studies in a more focused and comprehensive manner. As the only university in Canada to offer Irish Studies as a Major dealing with Ireland and the Irish in Canada, Concordia has raised the bar in terms of the wide-ranging curriculum that it continually offers to students from across the country and around the world.

The Major would require students to complete 42 credits in Canadian Irish

Studies which would provide a more structured and coherent program of multi-disciplinary study. In addition to courses on Ireland's history and culture, the Major would offer courses on various aspects of the Irish experience in Canada, especially Quebec. The Major would therefore offer students the opportunity to study aspects of their own history or Ireland's as a case study for a whole range of issues.

Considering the significant influence of the many Irish immigrants to Quebec, the creation of a full-fledged Bachelor of Arts degree in Canadian Irish Studies at Concordia University would be an excellent development for the school, the city, the province and most importantly, the students.

### Rare Historical Document Donated to Canadian Irish Studies

Thanks to the generosity of Bruce Dolphin, Canadian Irish Studies has recently received a County Armagh orange warrant, dated January 1, 1825. This original document was given by Professor Hereward Senior to Mr. Dolphin who recognized its value to researchers. Because the document comes from the Loughall area of County Armagh, the site of the Battle of the Diamond in 1795, which was the immediate antecedent of the late eighteenth-century orange revival, this warrant has special historical interest. At Concordia, it will be saved under proper archival conditions for the use of researchers.

### Book Collection of Professor Hereward Senior Donated to Centre

Thanks to Hereward Senior Jr., Canadian Irish Studies has received several cartons of Professor Hereward Senior's books on Irish history. For many years, Hereward Senior was a Professor in McGill University's Department of History and was an authority on Irish-Canadian history. Among his many important publications are: *The Fenians of Canada*; *The Last Invasion of Canada: the Fenians Raids, 1866-1870*; *Orangeism: the Canadian Phase*; *Constabulary: the Rise of Police Institutions in Britain, the Commonwealth and Victorious in Defeat: The American Loyalist in Exile*. The Hereward Senior book collection will be added to the Centre's growing library, to be used by students and scholars. The Centre is very grateful to receive the books of so distinguished an historian as Professor Senior, and thanks him and his family for this donation.

### Johnson Chair Update

The Canadian Irish Studies Foundation received the first installment of \$1 million from the Government of Quebec in October, with the second \$1 million to be donated within the coming months. Now the search process is underway for candidates for this prestigious position. It is hoped that the choice will be made in the spring so that the appointment could officially begin on July 1st. Meanwhile, the Centre for Canadian Irish Studies has also advertised for an Irish historian with the chosen candidate to be appointed also in the spring.

### Congratulations to Simon Jolivet

Simon Jolivet, recipient of several awards including the St. Patrick's Society Scholarship in Canadian Irish Studies at Concordia, successfully defended his PhD thesis entitled "Les deux questions irlandaises du Québec, 1898-1921 : des considérations canadiennes-françaises et irlando-catholiques" on October 10th 2008.



## Dr. Ann Saddlemyer Inaugurates New Lecture Series and Donates Book Collection to Canadian Irish Studies at Concordia

By Joseph Donnelly



Ann Saddlemyer with Concordia Head of Information Services, Judy Appleby

A priceless collection of books was donated to the Centre for Canadian Irish Studies by one of the world's leading experts on the Irish literary movement.

Dr. Ann Saddlemyer came to Concordia University in October to make the presentation and to give her lecture on Lady Gregory. Saddlemyer said she wanted her books to stay in Canada to benefit students and felt Concordia was the best place to keep them. "Some of these books are very rare, in the sense that they are small printings of specialized work," said Saddlemyer. "So I've been watching what's been happening at Concordia and I realized the Centre has been developing in a systematic and impressive fashion".

An overflowing EV amphitheatre welcomed Saddlemyer to Concordia. Her lecture was entitled "Lady Gregory, The Theatre, and the Ballad" and told the story of how an aristocrat from County Galway came to be an expert on Irish folklore and founded the Abbey Theatre with W.B. Yeats in 1904. "Lady Gregory had that kind of an exploring mind," Saddlemyer said. She was translating stories that people didn't know about. For someone who didn't have formal training, she knew what to do." In appreciation of Ann Saddlemyer's generous donation the Centre for Canadian Irish Studies has named an annual lecture in her honour. Professor Saddlemyer is also known for her work in Canadian theatre history and frequently lectures at the Shaw Festival. Her most recent book is called *Becoming George: the Life of Mrs. W.B. Yeats*. She currently lives in B.C.

## Remembering Griffintown

By Joseph Donnelly

An event held this past September celebrated the memory and survival of Montreal's old Irish neighbourhood.

The Remember Griffintown Festival was held over three days to celebrate the area's history through music, art and storytelling. A controversial \$1.3 billion development of the neighbourhood will dramatically change Griffintown but festival organizers insisted the event wasn't meant to be political. "The people who came in from Europe off the boat started in Griffintown. Whether they left quickly and went straight up the hill, this is where it all started," said Paul Aflalo, festival volunteer.

Visitors who came to the festival were treated to a free tour of the neighbourhood, which began by the Bonaventure Expressway. "There's the story of the depopulation of Griffintown due to industrialization and that's half true. The other story is that people left here willingly because Griffintown was a slum, it was not a nice place to live in," said Matthew Barlow, PhD candidate at Concordia University.

Barlow continued the tour to Griffintown's key sites, such as the Hay Market, the Dow Brewery and the site where Mary Gallagher was decapitated in 1879. "The ghost has been used by the former Irish in Griffintown as a means to rally the troops," said Barlow. "The tradition started in 1991 and every seven years, on the night that she was murdered, they wait to see if she'll show up."

The tour ended at the site of St. Ann's Church. Once the heart of the Irish Catholic community, it is now a park scattered with foundation stones. The church was torn down in 1970 due to lack of parishioners and increased industrialization of the neighbourhood.

Surrounding the park, however, are hints that Griffintown's history is still very much alive and reflects its Irish roots. Steven Peck studied urban planning in Dublin and gave a lecture on the similarities of Griffintown to working class neighbour-

hoods in Ireland. "You can see it in the architecture and see it in the relation of the buildings to each other and features of the landscape that used to exist. Particularly, the brickwork is one thing that is very noticeable. The city stands to lose a huge a chunk of its physical memory of itself," said Peck.

Peck adds that the dockside location in Dublin is seen as more important to the city and its identity than what the Lachine Canal is to Montreal. With recent news that the Devimco Inc. development of Griffintown is still going ahead, opponents to the project are still lining up. Richard Burman has produced a documentary on the neighbourhood, called *The Ghosts of Griffintown*. He said the recent festival has inspired another film. "I realized there could be a second documentary, not about the history anymore but more on urban revitalization. It doesn't sound like the plan they have here is the best way to go about it," said Burman.

According to a recent article in the *Gazette*, Devimco Inc. has options on about 85 per cent of the land in the area, up from 72 per cent when the project was approved in April.



Griffintown tour



## New School Proposed for Canadian Irish Studies

By Tim O'Connor

A committee comprised of various Arts and Science faculty members chaired by Dr. Ronald Rudin has proposed the creation of a new academic unit for Canadian Irish Studies.

The proposal for a School in Canadian Irish Studies will now go to the Senate and, if approved there, will eventually go to Concordia's Board of Governor's for final approval. The considerable expansion of Canadian Irish Studies as an academic

discipline in recent years and its projected growth in the future have led to this exciting development.

The School of Canadian Irish Studies would house both permanent faculty and those visiting Concordia to teach subjects in Irish Studies. Concordia's Canadian Irish Studies program is already on its way to being the premier destination in Canada for post-secondary education within the discipline. The new School

would ensure that Concordia remains competitive in the ever-changing world of university curricula.

As an academic discipline, Canadian Irish Studies at Concordia already plays a pivotal role in various Irish community events and will continue to do as it grows and develops. This involvement in the Irish community reciprocates the generous financial support which Canadian Irish Studies receives on a regular basis.

## The Road from Quebec to Donegal

By Tim O'Connor

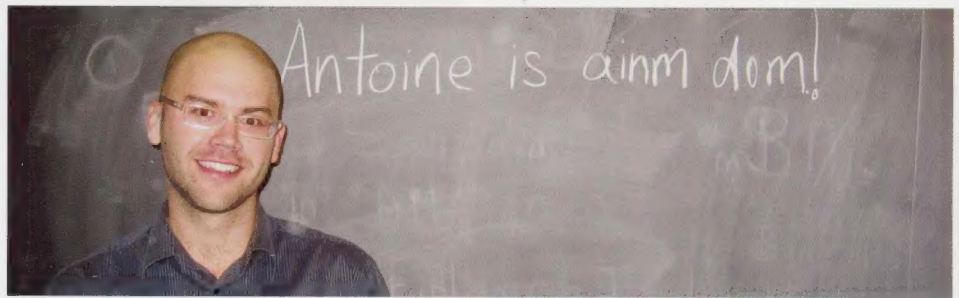
The resurgence of the Irish language is finding support from individuals with unlikely backgrounds. Although pockets of the Irish diaspora have continually maintained a certain level of 'comhrá', or conversation, the effects of the Celtic Tiger are now being felt beyond the realm of economic success.

As other European nations yearn for the same measure of success that has blessed Ireland since becoming a member of the continent's Economic Community, the domino effect of world-wide interest in Irish dance, music, film and language has been triggered. Nowhere is that more evident than in the enrollment in Gaelic classrooms, from Mayo to Montreal.

Considering that some 70 million Americans are of Irish descent and estimates in Quebec show that almost 40% of Quebecers have some Irish blood, it should not come as a surprise that interest be renewed when it comes to the language. It is of no surprise, therefore, that my Gaelic classroom has a Donnelly, a Keane, an O'Rourke and yours truly, an O'Connor. But who are the others? The last time I checked, Guillemette did not have an Irish heraldic crest!

However, Antoine Guillemette is a perfect example of the varied type of people that are maintaining the life of the Irish language. For Antoine, the decision to delve deeper into the Irish psyche and, as a consequence the language, came in an unusual place, England.

Antoine originally hails from Victoriaville,



Antoine Guillemette, PhD Candidate at Concordia

Quebec. Located in the Bois-Francs region, "Victo" is known for a number of things, notably hockey sticks, an experimental music festival and, as Antoine states with great pride, the real home of poutine. His travels took him from Victoriaville to the land where Victoria once reigned, where he enrolled in English language classes in 2002.

During his stay in Newcastle, Antoine met a number of Irish people and was intrigued by tales in the nation's history, culture and language. These encounters gave Antoine some insight to his current field of study – he is presently enrolled at Concordia in his second year of a PhD on 20th century Irish history.

This past summer he decided to attend Oideas Gael, a language school in Donegal, Ireland. Located in the town of Glean Cholm Cille, the school has been the pride and joy of Liam Ó Cuinneagain for the better part of 25 years. One of the foremost proponents of the resurgence of Gaelic, Liam welcomes people of all ages from all over the world.

Antoine spent seven weeks learning Irish language, dance, and music and enjoying

the benefits (and watery downfalls) of the northern Irish countryside. Every day the students are immersed in actual language classes between 10am-1pm and 3pm-5pm. Activities are scheduled every night and range from harp lessons to Irish dancing. Walking tours and other events take place during the day. "What's nice is that the students are from a variety of backgrounds", says Antoine. "You'll have PhD students from all over the world, middle-aged Americans tracing their roots and younger Irish students", he continued.

Antoine goes on to state that aside from being an eye-opening experience, Oideas Gael also gave him a greater understanding of the nuances of the Irish language. Currently enrolled in Modern Irish at Concordia, Antoine is an important resource to professor Martina Branagan. He is quick to mention that the Centre for Canadian Irish Studies was key in facilitating the trip to Donegal by offering advice and financial options.

When asked if he might return to Ireland for further study, Antoine doesn't hesitate, "To be sure!" For more information on Oideas Gael visit [www.oideas-gael.com](http://www.oideas-gael.com)



# My Summer Vacation!

By Valerie Shannon

Two predictable occurrences used to make me cringe when I was younger. First, there was the possibility that I might have to go to summer school to make up any poor grades and second, when I returned to school in the fall, there was the obligatory first essay entitled "My Summer Vacation". Well, being back at university as a mature student has made me rethink my aversion to these two possibilities.

This past summer I attended the Yeats International Summer School in Sligo Ireland as part of an Independent Study course which I am taking in the Certificate program in Canadian Irish Studies at Concordia. I was accompanied by Jocelyn Wakefield, a fellow student at Concordia who is doing a Minor in Canadian Irish Studies. For me, returning to Ireland as a visiting student was an experience of a lifetime. All of my previous Irish Studies courses provided a backdrop against which I saw the Irish countryside as I boarded the train in Dublin for the three hour trip from one coast of Ireland to the other. Once out of the city and environs, there is no doubt that Ireland is still a rural country at heart. Patchwork quilt-like fields, bordered by blackberry-laden hedges or dry wall fences, were populated by cows, sheep and horses. Endlessly rolling hills were intersected by tiny rivers. I kept imagining the young men described in Ernie O'Malley's book *On Another Man's Wounds*, criss-crossing the hills and going from one town to another to train or further their cause. I was brought back to present-day reality when we crossed the Shannon River and saw the never-ending parade of huge, motorized yachts threading their way leisurely to some unknown destination.

Sligo is a magical place and the perfect setting for the Yeats Summer School. With Ben Bulbin to the north and Knocknarea to the south and the smell of sea air everywhere, we were surrounded by historical, geological, geographical and literary evidence of the sources of inspiration in the life of W.B. Yeats. The Garavogue River filled with a wedge of swans and their cygnets who were probably visiting



Statue of WB Yeats

from Coole Park meanders through the town. Its tiny streets with both grey and colourful cottages, numerous pubs, book stores, trendy shops and imposing churches made Sligo an interesting and easy place to explore.

The Yeats Summer School, attended by 100 students the first week and 40 the second, was officially opened by Anne Enright, the 2007 Man Booker prize winner. She spoke about how she admired Yeats's ability to enact many different roles in his life and to still write productively. She also read with great feeling from her short stories and her prize winning novel *The Gathering*. The formal lectures began the following day and were given by twenty renowned Yeatsian scholars from Europe and North America. They presented their insights into many different aspects of the work and life of W.B. Yeats. Their papers were very stimulating, provocative, humorous and occasionally spiced with Yeats trivia. For example, I learned that Yeats's favourite bedside reading matter was detective stories and westerns! One of the professors, from Victoria, British Columbia, was Dr. Ann Saddlemyer who gave a very evocative and animated lecture on the role of music in the works of Yeats and Lady Gregory. She set a new and quite terrifying standard among her colleagues by ending her lecture with the singing of *The Rising of the Moon*! These lectures occurred in the morning and then we were free to pursue other interests. The Yeats Society in Sligo had a multimedia

exhibition on the life of Yeats and a modern art exhibit done by a distant Yeats relative. They also had an extensive library which we were free to use.

Each afternoon, we reconvened in a small seminar group with a particular professor to discuss one topic. Either at lunch time or in the evening, there were additional activities such as Irish fiddle music, Irish dancing, poetry readings, plays or concerts to round out our experience of traditional and modern Irish culture. In addition, students from the Yeats Summer School taking the drama elective performed the Noh inspired Yeats play *The Dreaming of the Bones*. As if all of that wasn't stimulating enough, there were day trips organized to Lissadell, Rosses Point, the Glencar Waterfall, the Carrowmore megalithic cemetery, Thor Ballylee, Coole Park, Lough Gill and Galway so that we could see first hand many of the places immortalized in Yeats's poetry.

The highlight for me was the appearance and poetry reading by Seamus Heaney, Ireland's fourth Nobel Laureate for Literature. One day he and his wife simply arrived at the school with no fanfare and mingled with the faculty and students generously responding to questions and photographs! He attended the lectures for several days and then gave a poetry reading



Glencar Waterfall figures prominently in Yeats's early poetry



to which everyone in Sligo was invited. To a packed Hawk's Well Theatre crowd he read his favourite poems by Yeats (*Cuchulain Comforted* and *What Then*), some of his own published poetry and two as yet unpublished works. He had just completed one as a thank you to all who had supported him during his recent illness and the other in honour of the birth of his granddaughter. What a treat!

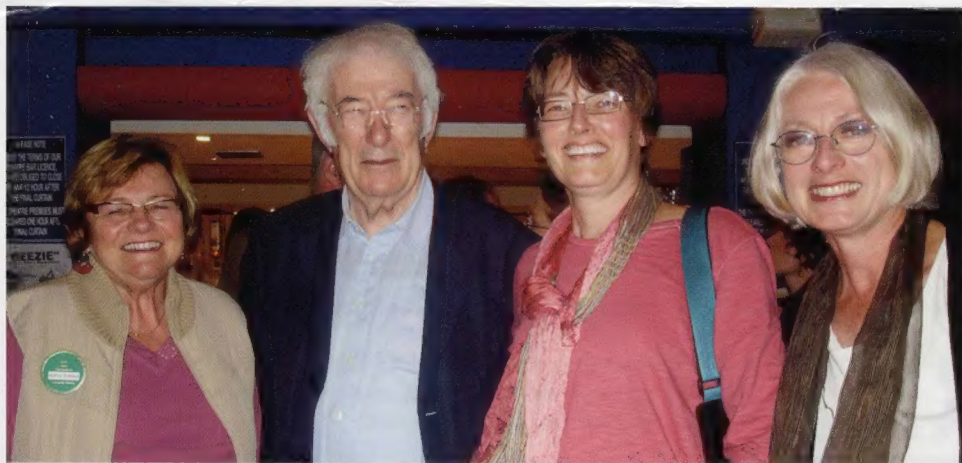
The fellow students we met were from many different cultures and all walks of life: old, young, retired, working, undergraduate, master's and PhD students, and faculty from other universities. Most came from the US but there were many from Ireland, the rest of Europe, Japan and one was from China. Her goal was to translate Yeats into Chinese when she returned home. There were three Canadians present, all of them from Concordia and two of which were from Montreal. All in all, we were a great group.

My summer vacation of 2008 was an experience I will never forget. I had always loved the poetry of W.B. Yeats and can now appreciate to an even greater degree



Thoor Ballylee – A medieval castle and Yeats's former home

the complexity and profundity of this man and his works. As Seamus Heaney said, "He decoded the morse of the Ireland that is ours".



Concordia Irish Studies Students, Valerie Shannon and Jocelyn Wakefield with fellow Yeats Summer School participant Jan Lewis and Irish Nobel Prize Laureate, Seamus Heaney

Valerie Shannon was a participant in the Field Studies in Ireland summer course offered annually in Canadian Irish Studies. This course involves students working on an individual basis with a Concordia-based professor in an Independent-Study mode. The course can be focused on a particular subject, for example, Literature, History, Languages, Cinema, Theatre, Economics, Music, Political Science, Art, Women's Studies, Folklore, Mythology, Religion or any other topic arrived at in agreement with the professor. This umbrella

course allows a variety of subjects to be studied in different disciplines during a summer visit to Ireland. Similar to an Independent Study course, the academic requirements are set by the professor in consultation with the student, and the professor is responsible for ensuring the academic standards of the course and for grading assignments. Students from all departments interested in enrolling are encouraged to contact the Centre for Canadian Irish Studies on (514-848-8711) or at [cdnirish@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:cdnirish@alcor.concordia.ca).

## Canadian Irish Studies for Everyone?

By Joseph Donnelly



Les Curry

A student in this fall's Irish Dramaturgy course inspires us all to be life-long learners. Les Curry is auditing the class by well-known Montreal director Kate Bligh for only \$28, an option available to all seniors at Concordia University. "I just enjoy," said the 91 year old. "That's what I like about school now when you're old – you don't have any homework!"

Curry is no stranger to the university, however. After his service in the air force in WWII, he graduated with honours at the University of Toronto in Engineering Physics. In 1965, he found employment with SNC-Lavalin in Montreal.

The course on Irish Dramaturgy, which deals with some classic plays of the Irish literary revival, sparked Curry's interest because the playwrights that were selected in this course describe the peasant life. "Other courses are usually about the gentry and the landed class," said Curry. "These plays do get into the social aspects of the peasants." Curry says the dirt floor house described in J.M. Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* was a lot like the one his father grew up in County Donegal during the 1860s. He notes his father was 55 years old by the time he had children and adds that his daughter was the first woman in two generations from his family to bear children. "That was the famine," he said "It had a real horrible influence on the way people lived and how they got married."

Kate Bligh, the instructor for Irish Dramaturgy is very pleased that Curry decided to join the class. "The fact that we have a living person in the classroom who actually predates the time of one of the plays, gives us the idea that the plays are really part of everybody's culture and everybody's heritage," said Bligh. Curry says he's inspired by the youth in the classroom and is glad to contribute his own knowledge, particularly on religion and archeology.



# Thanks Again to our Major Donors

Government of Quebec	2,500,000	John Cleghorn	17,000
Concordia Univ. Foundation	2,000,000	Lonsdale Holland	14,000
Government of Canada	500,000	Ronan Kearney	12,000
Government of Ireland	250,000	Ann Evans	12,000
David O'Brien	160,000	Eric Molson	12,000
St. Patrick's Society	160,000	Hon. Jean Charest	11,750
Anonymous	150,000	John J. O'Connor	11,650
Power Corporation	140,000	Hon. Michael Meighen	11,500
Royal Bank of Canada	112,500	Birks Foundation	11,000
Bank of Montreal	103,000	Pam Dunn	10,600
Canadian Pacific Ltd.	100,000	Zellers Family Foundation	10,000
McConnell Foundation	100,000	Richard Renaud	10,000
Imasco Limited	80,000	Paul Tellier	10,000
Petro-Canada Inc.	80,000	Charles Baillie	10,000
Kruger Incorporated	74,225	Brian & Anne Edwards	10,000
Bombardier Inc.	70,000	Letko Brosseau	10,000
Anonymous	70,000	Peter O'Brien	8,500
Webster Foundation	55,000	Bill Hurley	6,350
Irish Protestant Benevolent Society	45,000	Reeks Investments	6,200
Brian M. Mulroney	45,000	Irene Woods	6,000
Molson Foundation	40,000	Gail Belanger	6,000
George Weston Ltd.	40,000	David L. McIninch	5,500
Bank of Nova Scotia	35,000	Daniel Colson	5,500
Canadian National	35,000	James Barriere	5,250
United Irish Societies	31,920	Conrad Black	5,000
Margaret St. Clair Duffy	31,575	Jack Brennan	5,000
Laurentian Bank	30,000	Peter Cullen	5,000
Montreal St. Patrick's Foundation	25,000	Dominic D'Alessandro	5,000
Patrick & Barbara Keenan	25,000	Howard Davidson	5,000
Canada Steamship Lines	25,000	Peter Eby	5,000
James Stanford	25,000	Leslie H. Gault	5,000
Toronto Dominion Bank	25,000	Bryan Jones	5,000
Laurent Beaudoin	21,500	Harrison McCain Foundation	5,000
Bell Canada	20,000	Sydney McMorran	5,000
Brian Gallery	20,000	Ben Mulroney	5,000
City of Montreal	20,000	Gerry McCaughey	5,000
Moira Trainor Snow	18,000		

## IRISH AMERICA

M A G A Z I N E

**\*Special Low Price of only  
U.S. \$21.95**

**For friends of the  
Canadian Irish Studies Foundation**

**Please allow 6 weeks for delivery of first issue.**

**Payment in US currency only.**

**Forward payment to:**

**Irish America, Bellmawr, NJ 08099-9921 USA**

☐ **Yes! I wish to subscribe to IRISH AMERICA as I want to enjoy all the news, arts, and culture from Irish America and Ireland all year round.**

**Please send me a one-year subscription for only U.S.\$21.95\***

**Name**

**Address**

**Method of payment:** ☐ **Bill me**

☐ **Payment Enclosed** (Please make check payable to Irish America)

☐ **Credit card:**

☐ Amex ☐ Visa ☐ MC

**Card #**  **Expiry**

**Signature**

